

Japhet Cruz
EPA OEJTIA
Date: October 5, 2017

PARS Final-Year Performance Narrative for Dec 2016- September 2017

Since my arrival to EPA R6 OEJTIA/B2020 I have had the opportunity train, place into practice my Grant Management, Project Management, Coordination and engagement skills. I have quickly learned the B2020 Program and because of my fast learning skills I've been able to perform at the same level as my co-workers in El Paso Office. At times performing and developing high quality work on time, balancing, volunteering to help other when needed and with minimal supervision demonstrating my ability to perform at a higher General Schedule grade level.

Based on the B2020 increased workload since the BECC consultant contract was terminated and the great outcome of the FY'17 RFP I have rapidly been able to manage all my B2020 duties/responsibilities, performing as the 4 State main coordinator/liaison as well as keeping up with my Environmental Justice Project Officer duties.

I have been able to increase transparency and coordination between El Paso, Region 6, HQ and the wide geographical spread region of the 4 State for the B2020; improved Regional decision making in international program budget and projects pointing out deficiencies and duplicate efforts and at the same time providing sound solutions to address such issues; improved Regional participation in the development and implementation of international projects and priority area and increasing leveraging opportunities from other sources.

Improved process flow of information, project management, data organization, bringing additional resources to the program, performing outreach and engagement with potential partners, as well as spreading the message to the B2020 to take more leadership and ownership of the Program.

Continue to assist other co-workers when necessary, consulted and as requested in topics related with Emergency Management, Grants and Community Planning.

Major Accomplishments or Projects:

1. Reports and Document Preparation:

- a. Successfully provided support by translating the 3 and 4 State Regional Workgroup meeting agendas by collaborating with EPA XA, El Paso Office and R6 RA Office.
- b. Efficiently translated and drafted the 4 State Regional Workgroup meeting report for Border 2020 during Feb. 2017– worked with El Paso Office and BECC Consultant to ensure information was captured on the report.
- c. Preparation of a variety of reports partnering with El Paso Office and sent to EPA OEJTIA Leadership (OITA Reports, Weekly Activity Reports (WAR))
- d. Coordinated, collaborated and transcribed with Maria Sisneros on preparation of guidance and operative procedures relevant to Region 6 Border Program (Communication Plan, RFP flow Chart and Program Overview)
- e. Developed the 4 State Structure presentation and prepared a detailed excel report for both OEJTIA and El Paso Office related to current and past projects in the 3 and 4 State Border Regions.

- f. Drafted various documents for the Border Program, RFP Process etc. Some of these include a Dashboard where El Paso Office Director can monitor current activities or projects, Standard Operating Procedures related to the RFP process and an Operational Guide. These document can and will provide continuous support to current and future staff as far as how process work and a clear understanding of the program.
 - g. Developed various work plans, action plans, power point presentations for the benefit of the B2020 Program.
 - h. Provided clear and concise reports to management by utilizing various MS Programs and Share Point.
2. 4 State Coordination and Work:
- a. Facilitated with logistic coordination of the meeting and prep work with assigned taskforce co-leads. Reviewed presentations on Border 2020 in Feb. and provided information to the Border Office.
 - b. Coordinated and facilitated an Intergovernmental Working Session on August 23, EPA along with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Housing Urban Development (HUD), Harlingen Chamber of Commerce, TCEQ and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) in Weslaco, Texas, with the purpose of strengthening relationships, creating new partnerships and seeking a way to help the Border 2020 Program and the citizens of this geographical area.
 - Coordination with various federal, state and local agencies. Worked to ensure speakers were chosen to present, obtaining presentation and all necessary paperwork needed to ensure the information presented was of benefit of the 4 State Task Forces.
 - Coordinated conference venue logistics that included setup of main room and break out rooms. Was able to work with LRGVDC to be able to use their facilities during the event.
 - Presented a Border 2020 Presentation in the last session of the conference.
 - Topics covered- leveraging; synergy; partnerships; Gulf priorities; intergovernmental relationships; water infrastructure; emergency management; and geographic culture.
 - Overall it was a very productive and much needed session in order to continue strengthening the Border 2020 Program and continue building successful partnerships.
 - As a result of such collaboration the USGS agreed to be a partner in B2020 providing both technical and financial resources in a binational manner.
 - This event was done within budget and at very minimal expenses for the Program and the outcomes have been very successful.
3. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES: Have been assisting with development of various Communication activities for upcoming Border 2020 program. Various activities have involved frequent conference calls with staff from R9 and HQ and coordination with state and local partners.
- Help to draft and worked finalizing the Accomplishment/Transition Report for Border 2020 for September 2017– worked with El Paso Office, HQ and staff to finalize accomplishment reports.

- Worked on Border Report for OEJTIA office and Region 9 for activities related to GIS and finalizing the B2020 Tri Fold. Work included obtaining GIS files, working closely with R9 staff to recreate a more visual map of the Border and provided suggestions on final layout of the document.
- Conference Calls: Monthly calls with EPA HQ, R9, TCEQ and SEMARNAT staff to discuss communications within Border 2020 Program.
- SharePoint – Uploaded and organized material in Border 2020 SharePoint Site related to TCEQ action.
- OITA Weekly Report: provided El Paso Office with support regarding the OITA staff a weekly report on Region 6 Border Activities. This was a request by OITA as part of an effort to inform Presidential transition team members who sit on OITA senior staff meetings.
- Coordination with XA: Have coordinated with XA staff for input on a joint effort between OITA, R6, R9, San Diego Border Office and El Paso Office on the tri fold document being developed by BECC with the advice, recommendation and assistance of EPA.
- Actively met and participated with State stakeholder TCEQ in order to improve communication. As a result, we prepared action item table which was placed in our common SharePoint site with the purpose of all partners updating such information. Since then the communication between EPA, El Paso Office and TCEQ has improved at least in an 85%.
- Continue to engage, coordinate and collaborate with all Region 6 US-MX Border Team, OEJTIA Team Leads and co-workers, as well networking with other R6 Divisions.
- Have provided various suggestions to the Regional Hispanic Program Manager related to the program and even shared some previous material of when I was a former Hispanic Program Manager. Some have been shared with the Region and even consulted with Senior Leadership in R6.

4. Emergency Response Activities:

- Participated on monthly calls between EPA, PROFEPA and Civil Protection. Assisted with Reviewing Region 6 activities and providing feedback to HQ related to the Sister Cities Emergency Plan.
- Provided the Gulf Task Force with some suggestions on how to address these situations and placed them in contact with a great resource with the TXTDEM and FEMA. Still waiting for disaster activities to slow down to re-engage FEMA on a potential workshop or excursive in this area.
- Volunteered as Capacity Surge Force to support with disaster activities.

5. Border 2020 Task Force Participation or other Border Meetings:

- Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon-Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup:
- Attended 4state RWG meeting in Feb 2017. Provided recommendations of possible leverage sources during the private meeting with the U.S. and MX Leads.
- Assisted to coordinate the Amistad, Falcon and Gulf Upcoming Task Force meeting in April 2017 (assisted with logistical and possible talking material)
- Working closely with TCEQ in the development of the 2017-2018 Action Plan. The plan is already developed. Pretty much we have almost everything, we just received some information from SEDUMA and the information from a B2020

funded project. We are working with the translation of SEDUMAs information to English and include the information to the plan.

- Attended via go to meeting, the Amistad, Falcon and Gulf Task Forces held public meetings in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila; Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas and Matamoros, Tamaulipas. Over 161 stakeholders participated in the three public meetings. During each of the meetings, the 2017-2018 draft two-year action work plans were presented that included ongoing and planned projects by border stakeholders.
- City of Del Rio held an Earth Day event, where exhibits and booths were set up to educate the public on recycling, water conservation and gardening.
- The municipality of Ciudad Acuña signed an agreement with Enel S.A. de C.V. and Sowitec (wind power developers) to install 100 wind turbines in 25 acres of land located about 54 miles from the city.

6. R6 Environmental Justice:

- a. Collaborated with Paula Flores by providing technical advice and recommendation of possible Emergency Management outreach or approach in the Bridging Gaps initiative that she is developing.
- b. Met with EJ Team Lead Gloria Vaughn related to an Emergency Management and LEPC concern brought up in the Houston area. Provided some input and explained some technical aspects of EM communications used in such business area.
- c. Assigned as project officer for 2 EJ Small Grants with a total Grant Portfolio of \$60k.
- d. Actively negotiated the Budget and work plan with the selected Grantee and as a result was able to identify early in the process that one of the Grantee had an unallowable activity and for such consulted with both HQ/R6 Counsel and I was able to provide a clear understanding to the Grantee so that they reallocate the Budget and activity.

7. EPA R6 & B2020 Collaborating with City of Brownsville:

- a. Actively participated on conference calls regarding Greening America's Communities – Brownsville, TX "Greening of International Boulevard - Ecologización de Boulevard Internacional" In which various Divisions in R6 including B2020 is collaborating to leverage funding and more economic development activities with the City of Brownsville. Continue to provide information on ongoing Region 6 activities relevant to the collaborative activities.

8. Border 2020 Grant and Activities:

Continue to foster outreach and assistance to B2020 by the coordination and implementation of border program objectives.

- a. Helped with the development, draft and launching the Region 6 Border 2020 Program, through the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC), request for proposal on May 31, 2017. As a result of the Workshops throughout all the Border in both the US-MX over 109 proposals were received.
- b. Coordinated and participated in several meetings in Texas during early 2017, prior to the RFP launch to get public input to identify priorities in the border communities that align with the goals and objectives of the Program.
- c. Continue to work closely with BECC staff to review Border 2020 grants and ensure that our Collaborative Agreement is not breached by working with Monica

Wilson and other staff by providing any technical assistance on ongoing projects, when requested or needed.

- d. Monitor, review and analyze B2020 grants reports and provided advice on certain discrepancies to both El Paso Office leadership and Project Officer.
- e. Continue to review BECC project quarterly reports
- f. Reviewed the 2017-2018 4 State Region Action Plan and priorities
- g. Helped El Paso Office/BECC with the GAP analysis.
- h. Suggested to BECC to conduct a survey of customer service and overall grant project management.
- i. Performed the review, analysis and scoring of over 15 Environmental Grant Proposals for the Border 2020 Program.
- j. Drafted various Excel reports, graphics and table to help summarize and have a visual of the '17 RFP.
- k. Participated and help justify the scoring of various '17 RFP Proposals

9. OTHER RELEVANT ACTIVITIES:

- a. Contribute and participate on conference calls between HQ, Regions on ZIKA based on my past experience with Dallas County Office of Emergency Management as their former Planning Chief I was able to deliver to OITA and El Paso Office with documentation and verbal advice regarding how Dallas County in the past had responded to these types of events by sharing non confidential and public documents to the team.
- b. Supported OEJTIA and R6 by coordinating sustainability day activities and with the help of Randy Gee, Debra Tellez and Alexa Olson OEJTIA was able to display the Building Blocks activity which EJ had a great interest.
- c. Coordinating 2-4 Workshops in the 4 State Region alongside with TCEQ, and the Task Forces related to Environmental Health, Vector awareness, Waste management and Electronic Recycling.

10. Training Completed:

- a. New Employee mandatory training
- b. New Employee Orientation
- c. HT401 State Department Security Training
- d. Unauthorized Disclosures Policies
- e. 952 24hr EPA H&S training
- f. 2017 Mandatory Training
- g. Coop
- h. Lean 101 training
- i. Project Officer Training
- j. Quality Project and Program Management training
- k. Skill port leadership trainings